

**REMARKS**

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

**Status of Claims:**

Claims 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16 and 18 are currently being cancelled.

Claims 14 and 19 are currently being amended.

Claims 20-37 are currently being added.

This amendment and reply adds, cancels and amends claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After adding, canceling and amending the claims as set forth above, claims 14, 17 and 19-37 are now pending in this application.

**Indication of Allowable Subject Matter:**

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter made in the Office Action with respect to claim 14 ("objected to"). By way of this amendment and reply, presently pending claim 14 has been amended to place that claim in independent form to include the features of its base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, presently pending independent claim 14, as well as claims 17 and 22-25 that depend from claim 14, are now in allowable form based on the indications made in the Office Action with respect to claim 14. Also, by way of this amendment and reply, presently pending claim 19 has been amended to place that claim in independent form to include the features of its base claim 18 (along with a feature of base claim 12 that did not have a "method step" equivalent in base claim 18) and the features of claim 14 (written as a method claim), so effectively presently pending independent claim 19 corresponds in scope to presently pending independent claim 14, but written as a method claim. Thus, presently pending independent claim 19, as well as its dependent claims 26-29, are believed to be in allowable form based on the indications made in the Office Action with respect to claim 14. New independent claim 20 has been added,

whereby that claim corresponds to presently pending independent claim 14, but written as a “non-means plus function” claim. Claims 30-33 depend from independent claim 20. New independent claim 21 has also been added, whereby that claim corresponds to claim 20, but written without any “means plus function” elements. Claims 34-37 depend from independent claim 21.

**Claim Rejections – Prior Art:**

In the Office Action, claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,850,716 to Kurihara in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,262,329 to Bright et al.; claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kurihara in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,606,613 to Lee; claims 7 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kurihara in view of Bright et al. and Lee and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,903,647 to Ronning; claims 12, 13, 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,058,476 to Matsuzaki et al. in view of Ronning and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,023,506 to Ote et al.; and claims 15, 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuzaki et al., Ronning and Ote et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,024,500 to Ashizaki et al.

Due to the cancellation of claims 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16 and 18, and due to the amendments made to claim 19 to effectively make that claim a “method” equivalent to claim 14, these rejections are now moot.

**Conclusion:**

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.